(a) what is the number of foreign tourists who visited India in the last three years, year-wise and foreign exchange earned from tourism in the same period;

(b) whether Government has taken any steps to make India a competitive and attractive destination for foreign tourists; and

(c) if so, the details in the regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) The details of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) and Foreign Exchange Earning (FEE) during the last three years are given below:-

Year	FTAs (in million)	FEE (in US$ million)
2006	4.45	8634*
2007	5.08	10729*
2008	5.37@	11747#

* Revised Estimate, # Advance Estimate @ Provisional Estimate

(b) and (c) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations. However, to supplement the efforts of the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations, and to make India a competitive and attractive destination for foreign tourists, the Ministry of Tourism inter-alia takes the following steps:

- Development of tourism infrastructure at tourist sites with the cooperation of other Ministries/ Departments and State/ UT Governments;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure, particularly that for budget hotels;
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Direct approach to the consumers through electronic and print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign;
- Production and distribution of publicity material;
- Direct co-operative marketing with the airlines, tour operators and wholesalers in overseas markets;
- According greater focus to the emerging markets, particularly of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;
- Participation in Trade Fairs and Exhibitions;
- Use of internet and web marketing; and
- Re-inforced hospitality programmes including grant of air passages to invite media personnel, tour operators on familiarization tours to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products.

Villages/small towns as tourist spots

†827.SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government have any proposal to make remote villages and small and medium towns spots of tourist attraction;

(b) if so, the details thereof,

(c) whether Government is focusing on development of tourism in peripheral areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether orchards are being planted or proposed to be planted beside highways in order to encourage tourism; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations for infrastructure development in rural sites having tourism potential under the ongoing scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations & Circuits, while community participation and the capacity building including skill up-gradation in such rural sites are being supported through Capacity Building for Service Providers Scheme of the Ministry and Government of India-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Endogenous Tourism Project.

The objective is to enable visitors to gain first hand experience of diverse rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations and in villages which have core-competency in terms of craft/handlooms/textiles etc. So far 139 rural sites have been sanctioned.

(e) and (f) There is no such scheme or proposal with the Ministry of Tourism.

Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar islands

828. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is tremendous potentiality for Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands;

(b) if so, whether such opportunity was not exploited; if so the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there has been a study and survey relating to such potentiality and possibility to exploit; and

(d) when such study was made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) to (d) The development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Governments/ UT Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism extends financial assistance to them for tourism related projects which are identified in consultation and interaction with them. To facilitate the efforts of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration, Government of India had prepared in 2003 a 20-Year Perspective Plan for development of tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.